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## A BEGINNER'S COLLECTION.

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**T**HERE has been much written upon the subject of stamp collecting, and how to start a collection, but we must admit that suggestions given by another on the subject will always bring more or less light, or change the idea of those who are beginners. I give below a few ideas of my own as to the best and most advantageous methods for a beginner to employ in his collection. By the beginner I mean one whose collection consists of about five hundred varieties. When I first heard of philately I thought that it would take a large sum of money to get some old stamps from the old country, but I followed the rules given me by one who knew by experience the proper way of collecting, and great benefit was derived from the instruction which he gave me.

A beginner should always learn from those who have been collecting a long time, and should never be afraid to ask questions when in difficulty, if it is in his power to do so. It is a pleasure for an advanced collector to assist his younger collecting friends, and as a rule the older collectors are always willing to instruct you how to get along. If there are no other collectors in your town to whom you can apply for advice, a few lines written from time to time to the editor of some Philatelic paper will serve to enlighten you. Again let me urge the importance of reading your stamp magazines carefully, as much useful information can be picked up in this way. In starting, when you hear that philatelic papers are published in the interest of our hobby, you obtain the address of some publisher and send for a sample copy, and in looking over it you will invariably find offers of dealers who will send for the small amount of ten cents one hundred different stamps, or for twenty-five cents one hundred and fifty to two hundred stamps. It is needless to state that you will not get for such a small price rare stamps, yet you will secure a variety which will give you a good start. Almost every day opportunities will be afforded you to add some new varieties to your collection, and when your collection reaches a certain number you will find it to your advantage to obtain a few of the approval sheets of the cheaper class of some reliable dealer and make your purchases in this manner. Approval sheets are generally sent out marked by catalogue rates and a discount of 40% or 50% allowed from the marked price.

Many young collectors collect, regardless of what they are collecting. Revenue and postage stamps are one and the same thing to them. I

have met collectors to whom nothing gave such pleasure as a set of those worthless frauds the German locals. I would advise collectors to collect only postage stamps if they are making a general collection, but should they wish to specialize (that is, collect the stamps of only one or two countries), it is better to collect everything in the way of stamps ever issued by the said countries. For a beginner specialism is of little or no use, as never has a collector secured sufficient knowledge in the science of philately to decide intelligently which countries will prove the most advantageous to collect, it is therefore advisable to collect from the world at large. When a collector has obtained some two or three thousand varieties he is then in a position to judge which countries he prefers to collect.

Regarding the choice of an album; a blank book should always have the preference, when you only have a few stamps, and they should be arranged as tastily as possible. When beginning do not undertake to collect water-marks, perforations, shades and errors. Take only the ordinary varieties, as in your capacity of a beginner you can neither profitably nor intelligently collect these sub-varieties, and at some later date will be plenty of time to employ yourself in studying your stamps and find out that which you have neglected during your early days of collecting. I do not mean to criticise those who immediately on entering the field throw themselves into the first rank, and become an advanced collector at once. There are few who have the talents or means to take such steps.

It is a good idea when you have a small collection to buy your stamps in packets which can be obtained at a very low price. After having selected therefrom those which you have not in your collection the duplicates can generally be exchanged among your friends for others which you need to complete your sets. A collection of a thousand varieties can thus be obtained at the cost of a couple of dollars. Although after passing the thousandth mark a collector is no longer considered a beginner, yet I would advise him to continue collecting in the same way until he reaches the two thousandth mark; then there is time enough to consider the advisability of becoming a specialist or anything else to which your mind may lead you. These few remarks, though crudely expressed and known to most collectors, may prove useful to many who are just entering in the ranks of collectors and for whom this article is written.

In Luxemburg people wanting work have only to make application to the head of the post office department, to have their wants advertised in every post office in the grand duchy.